

Serial No.: 09/476,799  
Examiner: Duc Minh Nguyen  
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**OFFICIAL**In the claims:

Please cancel herein claims 26, 27, 29, 32, 34 and 35.

1 -24 . (previously Canceled).

25. (currently amended) A method for a system including a plurality of encoders each for receiving a digital signal to generate a respective encoded signal, a generator for generating a test signal, a plurality of cards each coupled to a respective conductor for sending signals to a respective subscriber, the method comprising the step, performed in each card, of

maintaining a first current path between a respective encoder and the respective conductor, to transfer the encoded signal from the encoder to a respective subscriber, and the following subsequent steps, performed in one of the cards, of

breaking the first current path;

making a second current path between the generator and the respective conductor, to transfer the test signal from the generator to the conductor, and the following step, performed currently with the two previous steps, in remaining ones of the cards, of

maintaining the first current path between the respective encoder and the respective conductor, to transfer the respective encoded signal from the encoder to the respective subscriber;  
and

connecting another encoder to the second current path.

26. (canceled)

27. (canceled)

28. (currently amended) A processing system for a first system having a plurality of conductors and a plurality of subscribers, the processing system comprising:

a plurality of encoders each for receiving a digital signal to generate a respective encoded signal;

a generator for generating a test signal;

a plurality of cards each coupled to a respective conductor for sending signals to a respective subscriber, each card including

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a current switch for maintaining a first current path between a respective encoder and the respective conductor, to transfer the encoded signal from the encoder to a respective subscriber, and for making a second current path between the generator and the respective conductor, to transfer the test signal from the generator to the conductor;

each current switch including a first current switch and a second current switch, said first current switch for maintaining the first current path and said second current switch for maintaining the second current path.

29. (canceled)

30. (Original) The processing system of claim 28 further including a current switch for connecting another encoder to the second current path.

31. (Original) The processing system of claim 28 wherein each current switch includes a mettalic relay.

32. (canceled)

33. (currently amended) A processing system for a first system having a plurality of conductors and a plurality of subscribers, the processing system comprising:

a plurality of encoders each for receiving a digital signal to generate a respective encoded signal;

a generator for generating a test signal;

a plurality of cards each coupled to a respective conductor for sending signals to a respective subscriber;

means, activatable for each card, for maintaining a first current path between a respective encoder and the respective conductor, to transfer the encoded signal from the encoder to a respective subscriber;

means for making, activated in one of the card, a second current path between the generator and the respective conductor, to transfer the test signal from the generator to the conductor;

means for connecting another encoder to the second current path; and

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means for maintaining, activated in remaining ones of the cards, the first current path between the respective encoder and the respective conductor, to transfer the respective encoded signal from the encoder to the respective subscriber.

34. (canceled)

35. (canceled)